

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Naíscóil Chill Locha, Killough,  
County Down

Report of an inspection in  
April 2016

## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

## Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Twenty-one percent of parents and 50% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. All of the responses were wholly positive. The parents expressed their appreciation of the caring staff and the range of stimulating activities that are available to the children. All of the findings from the questionnaires were shared and discussed with the representatives from the management group and the staff.

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## 3. Context

Naíscoil Chill Locha is accommodated in purpose-built mobile accommodation in Killough, County Down. Currently, 14 children attend the part-time session in the naíscoil, nine of whom are in their immediate pre-school year. A baseline inspection was carried out in March 2015.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Address urgently the significant areas for improvement</b>
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Requires significant improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Requires significant improvement

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are confident and at ease with the adults and are beginning to form friendships with each other. A small number of children engage in co-operative and sustained play, particularly in the construction and role-play areas. The majority of the children, however, lack concentration and interest in a majority of the activities and this often results in poor behaviour.
- Most of the children have a good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and a majority are beginning to respond in Irish using single words. A majority of the children participate enthusiastically during rhymes and are developing appropriate early-writing skills; their representational artwork is of a good standard. The children are developing a satisfactory understanding of early mathematical language and concepts including shape, colour and number.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The staff have created an attractive learning environment which is enhanced by displays of the children's artwork and the range of real-life and authentic resources that are available to the children. In order to develop more concentrated and sustained play, the staff need to evaluate the purpose of and the amount of resources that are available at any one time and the intended learning in each of the planned activities.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is of a good standard on occasions but often requires improvement. The staff engage regularly and readily with the children during play and use Irish in most of their interactions with the children.
- As the session progresses, the children become less secure in the routines and this results in a number of behavioural issues. The staff need to embed the social routines of the naíscoil and improve the organisation of both the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- There are opportunities for play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and strengths are evident in the opportunities for the children to develop their creative artwork and to engage in construction play and role-play. There is, however, insufficient planning to guide the work of the staff and to ensure progression in the children's learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, particularly the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The current practice of observing, recording and assessing the children's development requires significant improvement; the staff will require additional time to enable them to develop this practice.
- The naíscoil gives good attention to healthy eating and physical activity.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leader is committed to the life and work of the naíscoil and is supported well by her current staff and management committee. There has been a number of changes in staff over recent years which has impacted significantly on the quality of the provision in the naíscoil. A process of self-evaluation has been established with the support of Altram although the lack of stability in staffing has delayed the development of this essential work.

- The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the naíscóil through, for example, the welcome booklet and, more recently, through social media. The staff have identified the need to develop further the links with parents.
- The early years specialist from Altram provides regular support to the staff in the naíscóil and has identified appropriate areas that require significant improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscóil has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following areas needs to be addressed:
  - all staff need to be clear on the processes and procedures that should be followed in the event of a child protection or safeguarding incident; and
  - staff need to ensure the completion of written risk assessments for all

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Naíscóil Chill Locha needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the naíscóil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- review urgently the organisation of the day and the planned activities to meet more effectively the needs of all the children and to provide more opportunities for the children to make independent choices and to engage in sustained and purposeful free play;
- develop, as a matter of urgency, the planning, observation and assessment processes in order to best meet the needs of individual children and to ensure progression in learning for all of the children; and
- address the reported safeguarding issues.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON NAÍScoil CHILL LOCHA, COUNTY DOWN

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	14
Under 3 years of age*	5
Funded by Department of Education	9
With statement of special educational needs	
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	
With English as an additional language	
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	90%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	2.5 hours	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within the previous 12 months		1

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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